

IMAGINEBLOOMINGTON STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY, JULY 31, 2013

Meeting summaries are transcribed in an abridged manner and no audio recordings are available. All Steering Committee meetings are open to the public.

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members: Jack Baker, Jason Banach, Doug Bruce, Scott Burgins, Susan Fernandes, Don Griffin, Dave Harstad, Nikki Johnson, Mike Litwin, Patrick Murray, Andy Ruff, Phil Stafford, Maggie Sullivan, Ron Walker and Larry Wilson.

Others in attendance: Paul Ash, Larry Jacobs, Katie Bannon (staff), Jacqui Bauer (staff), Josh Desmond (staff), Danise Alano-Martin (staff), Nate Nickel (staff), Scott Robinson (staff).

Goal Setting for Group 3 Topics: Transportation, Economic & Sustainable Development and Government Services

Mr. Robinson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back to discuss the Group 3 topics and specifically transportation. Mr. Nickel provided an overview of the Group 2 goal workshop held on June 25th. He briefly outlined the major discussion points and feedback that staff received at that workshop. Mr. Wilson asked if any negative concerns were raised at the workshop. Mr. Nickel replied that overall, it was positive and the concerns raised were all constructive in nature. Mr. Desmond then gave a short overview regarding current transportation initiatives and issues that are occurring both locally and nationally. He also reviewed the specific 2002 GPP goals that relate to transportation.

Mr. Robinson then invited discussion for identifying transportation priorities. Mr. Murray said that generational assumptions and expectations affect transportation decisions. He also felt that cars will continue to be important in the future, but how they are powered will change. Ms. Johnson asked about Zip Car usage at Indiana University and whether future partnerships with the city might be possible. Ms. Bauer replied that she has heard that Zip Car has been well received and they are looking to expand on campus. Mr. Banach later provided specific usage data for campus. He said that there were 3 Zip Cars in 2010, which increased to 6 Zip Cars in 2013. There were a total of 1,291 users.

Mr. Stafford talked about factors such as age, abilities and income that impact transportation. Providing more mobility choices and better coordination between current transportation providers can help to expand options for the community. Mr. Baker agreed and cited bicycle examples from both European and U.S. cities. Mr. Harstad felt the city overall is doing well on transportation. His priorities include extending Adams Street to Tapp Road, as well as eliminating one-way streets when possible, via a case-by-case basis. Mr. Bruce agreed with Mr. Harstad's one-way street comment. To increase bicycle commuting viability, he suggested that it is very important to expand bicycle storage, parking and other amenities, especially in parks that are along trails and within private developments. Discussion ensued regarding both specific locations and types of parking/storage facilities.

Mr. Stafford said that incentives for bicycle infrastructure are important. Mr. Litwin said that many factors affect traffic volume. He felt that traffic volume will decrease in the future and that fact needs to be reflected in planning efforts. Mr. Baker said that trying to link city and MPO transportation goals are very important. Ms. Fernandes said a priority for cars, bicycles and pedestrians is a good east-west route

in the city. She used 2nd Street where it dead-ends at College Mall as an example of this need. Ms. Fernandes also talked about applying "universal design principles" of housing to streets to make them more accessible. Mr. Robinson pointed out the "Complete Streets" concept that Mr. Desmond mentioned earlier fits this concept well. Ms. Fernandes also discussed bike commuter data for Portland, Oregon and the practical difficulties that many face in accommodating low bike to work rates. Mr. Robinson said that commute to work data does not factor in all other trips made, only those that are home to work and back. Discussion continued on the need to provide strong transit services to help people get to work without driving a car.

Ms. Sullivan felt that a lack of a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over State Road 37 is a major gap. She also mentioned the difficulty for people to find car-free options in going to downtown Indianapolis. Possibly getting a "Megabus" for Bloomington at some point would be a great option. Mr. Griffin said that we have good transit service, but need to increase the number of people that use it. Mr. Desmond answered that transit systems often find it hard to capture "choice riders", or those that have other transportation options, but still choose to use transit. Mr. Griffin also suggested having greater usage of rideshare/vanshare programs and "school pools" transportation options. Many other cities have these types of programs, as does Indiana University, so good examples to follow are out there. Mr. Stafford agreed and said that recent technology applications can help support and enhance these options.

Discussion ensued regarding transit route frequency, route locations and smart technology use on buses. Mr. Murray said that having specific transit ridership metrics would be helpful. Mr. Robinson said that staff would contact Bloomington Transit to find out those metrics and report back. He also pointed out that transit funding is mentioned in the vision statement and that is an area to explore further. Ms. Johnson asked how many city streets have a sidewalk only on one side. Mr. Robinson replied that staff would also look into that and report back. Mr. Wilson said there is a need to take another look at transportation systems to make sure they reflect changing demographics and transportation attitudes. He suggested that roads in the future need to create spaces and not just simply move traffic, as was the goal of past thinking. Mr. Wilson said that this situation is especially true for the city's downtown.

Mr. Litwin asked about why previous park and ride programs failed. Mr. Robinson answered that it was due to multiple factors, with route selection and neighborhood concerns being problematic. Discussion ensued about opportunities for future park and ride programs to serve the downtown. Mr. Robinson asked about transportation trends and what people have observed locally. Mr. Wilson said that using transit allows commuters to be more productive. Mr. Ruff said that transportation projections based on past trends is problematic. Using this model can create a more dangerous environment for bicycle and pedestrian modes. Mr. Ruff pointed out that the vision statement calls for building an environment that is not centered on vehicles and this is important for the Steering Committee to focus on.

Discussion ensued about bicycling in the winter months, round-about design, bicycle infrastructure and overall demand for bicycle transportation. Mr. Burgins asked about what general factors make bicycle transportation successful. Mr. Robinson said this is hard to measure, due to the many factors involved. Mr. Wilson said investments in bicycle infrastructure, even if small, are very helpful. Mr. Walker said that the area around the Grimes and Walnut intersection suffers from traffic congestion. Mr. Stafford said that a road through the future Switchyard park would have been very helpful for this. Ms. Sullivan suggested that maintenance of existing roads is more important than building new ones.

Mr. Robinson closed by reminding the Steering Committee that the next meeting is scheduled for August 14th. It will be a continuation of the Group 3 goal development session, with a specific focus on the Economic and Sustainable Development. If there are further ideas regarding Transportation issues, they can also be addressed at that meeting too.